

TWENTY QUESTIONS

A Socratic dialogue, without answers

1. What is a union?
 - a. Do we wish any significant differences between a farm workers' union, and other labor unions?
 - b. Are any significant differences ~~for~~ required by the nature of the situation?
2. ~~What kind of union~~ Who is to be organized?
 - a. Fields, then sheds? sheds, then fields? simultaneously? independently?
 - b. Year-around semisupervisory? year-around operatives? permanent local? seasonal local? intrastate migrants? interstate migrants? reliable "unemployables"? unreliable "unemployables"? single men? family workers? foreign contract nationals?
 - c. Do we "play it by ear?" attempt all at once? or focus upon certain types of workers at the outset, then move on to others, then on to still others? If so, ~~in~~ what sequence should our emphases follow?
3. Who will do the organizing?
 - a. Is it easier to make a farm worker into an organizer than to make an organizer into a farm worker?
 - b. Does an organizer need to know agricultural labor intimately before he can move effectively among agricultural laborers? Does he need to be one of the "in-group?"
 - c. If organizers may properly come from other than farm labor backgrounds, where may they be found?
 - d. Can organizers be recruited on the basis of field workers' wages? Is it valid to suppose that field workers will resent organizers who are paid more than they?
4. Are organizers born or are they made?
 - a. To the extent they are "born", how does one recognize them? ~~What~~ Can performance tests be devised which will quickly and accurately separate those with the gift from those without?
 - b. To the extent they are "made," who is to train them? Through what sort of curriculum? How long?

- should
5. Where ~~will~~/organizing be done?
- a. At union offices? at places of employment? in private homes? Why?
 - b. Should emphasis be placed on particular sizes of farms? If so, which? Why?
 - c. Is it feasible to try to build a farm labor union on a narrow geographical base? If so, how narrow? State? regional? county? part of a county? Why?
 - d. Is it feasible to try to organize along agricultural commodity lines? If so, which commodities should be undertaken first? Why?
6. When ~~will~~ should organizing be done?
- a. Primarily in-season, or primarily out-of-season? Why?
 - b. Should timetables be created, and deadlines laid down? If so, in what respects? How flexible should they be? If not, how can momentum otherwise be sustained?
 - c. Is it ~~possible~~/to maintain a sense of urgency and impetus in a long-range campaign? ~~if so, how?~~ Why? If desirable or necessary, how is it possible to maintain this sense?
- desirable or necessary
7. Is it necessary/to draw up an over-all organizational strategy in advance? Why?
8. Is it possible to draw up an advance strategy which is meaningful and effective?
- a. How much flexibility can be permitted without destroying a strategy's usefulness?
 - b. Can one anticipate all the likely alternative consequences of a given course of action, and provide an appropriate reaction to each?
 - c. Who shall be responsible for formulating a strategic design? For implementing it?
- or desirable
9. Is it necessary/to consider tactics in advance of the discrete tactical situation? Why?
- in advance
10. Is it possible to devise/a set of tactical alternatives which will be adequate to the discrete situation? (a, b, and c, under #8 apply here as well.)
- or desirable
11. Is it necessary/to draw up in advance a structural plan for the organizing committee, and for the locals which are organized?
- in advance
12. Is it possible to draw up/a structure which will be adequate to the demands of ~~the~~ organization?
- a. Should the organizing committee, for example, include a training/department, an office manager, a research department, a public relations department? Others?
 - b. How many "hats" can one individual wear before his efficiency breaks down?
 - c. How sharply should lines of authority be drawn?
- and education

13. Should the farm labor movement be concerned with political action? Why?
 - a. If so, to what extent?
 - b. What type of political action? Voter registration? Selection and endorsement of candidates? Legislative lobbying?
 - c. To what ends? Preferential legislation for farm labor? Absolute equality for farm labor? A nearer approach to equality for farm labor?
14. Should the farm labor movement be concerned with public opinion? Why?

By what means

 - a. ~~xxxxxxx~~/can it influence public opinion?
 - b. In what directions should it attempt to exercise this influence?
15. What should be the nature of the farm labor movement's dealings with agricultural employers?
 - a. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Is reasonableness likely to be effective? If so, at what point? In what form? In what amounts? Why?
 - b. Is the "class struggle" likely to be effective? Why? At what points? In what forms? In what amounts?
 - c. Can we hope to make common cause with small growers?
16. What should be the nature of the farm labor movement's dealings with the government agencies in the field?
 - a. Do we tend to exaggerate the ~~influence~~ possible influence of the government agencies on the farm labor market -- both for "evil" and for "good?"
 - b. Is it proper for us to "negotiate" with government agencies, as though they were agricultural employers? Why?
 - c. How much emphasis should we place on the Mexican National program? Why? What type(s) of emphasis? Compliance activity? "Bumping?" Other?
 - d. If the Mexican National program is abolished, which of our problems will be solved? Which problems will be created? Why?
17. What is to be the relationship between AWOC and the farm labor union to come?
 - a. At what point does the AWOC "wither away" in each area and turn over its stewardship to local workers themselves?
 - b. Is UPWA henceforth to have jurisdiction over both field and shed workers? Is this jurisdiction to be administered through Local 78?
 - c. Is it feasible to consider the possibility that field workers may at some later date have the opportunity to "dis-amalgamate" from UPWA?

18. Does the farm labor movement at this point require primarily messianic leadership, or primarily administrative leadership? Why?
 - a. What are the functions of each type of leadership?
 - b. Is it possible to combine them, either within the same individual or within the same staff? If so, what should be the proportions of each?
19. As war is said to be too important to leave to the generals, is the unionization of agriculture too important to be left to the unions?
 - a. What role can and should community organizations, such as the CSO play?
 - b. What role can and should religious organizations, such as the Bishops' Committee on Migratory Labor play?
 - c. What role can and should impartial institutions, such as colleges and universities play? Would it be appropriate, for example, for the AWOC and a Department of Sociology to arrange jointly a study of organizational drives in other seasonal industries, such as longshoring and lumbering, and in agriculture itself, as in the Hawaiian Islands, Puerto Rico, and a number of foreign countries?
 - d. What role can and should citizens' groups, such as the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, and the California Citizens' Committee for Agricultural Labor, play? Are they too closely linked with the labor movement, at the present time, to be as effective as they might be?
 - e. If organizations outside the labor movement, such as the CSO, are given responsibilities in connection with the unionization of farm labor, should they be given corresponding authority in decision-making?
 - f. Should periodic conferences be held, involving the many groups which are directly or indirectly concerned with the farm labor movement, at which basic premises and policies were re-examined? If so, who should arrange such conferences? Should the results be binding?
20. What kind of agriculture do we want within what kind of society?
 - a. Who will do the farm work of tomorrow?
 - b. Is the disappearance of the family farmer inherent within the logic of an industrialized society?
 - c. If so, should and could the farm labor movement attack the logic of such a society?
 - d. What kind of human beings should the farm labor movement be engaged in building?